

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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### CONYERS JOINS IN CALL FOR DISCLOSURE TO AMERICAN PUBLIC OF JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANTI-TERRORISM EFFORTS

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement at the introduction of the "Surveillance Oversight and Disclosure Act of 2003":

"In the nearly two years since the horrific events of September 11, this Administration and the Attorney General have taken a series of constitutionally dubious actions that place the Executive Branch in the untenable role of legislator, prosecutor, judge and jury. What is even more troubling is that the Justice Department is acting in this manner in complete secret; it refuses to disclose to those it is protecting – the American public – how it is conducting the war on terrorism.

"It's not just John Conyers saying this – there is a growing number of independent and non-partisan voices saying that the Justice Department needs to be more accountable to the American people regarding the tactics used to fight the war on terrorism. In fact, editorial boards across the country have noted:

"Ashcroft's department continues to conduct scores of activities, including vastly expanded surveillance of American citizens, under a veil of secrecy." Editorial, *Ashcroft the Zealot: He Can't be Trusted to Protect Liberty; Giving Him More Power is Unwise*, S.J. MERCURY NEWS, June 6, 2003, at C1. [San Jose, California]

"In the government's zeal to protect the nation from terrorist attack, extra care must be taken to defend the freedoms and way of life that make the United States the envy worldwide. Congress cannot sanction vastly expanded surveillance of American citizens by an agency that insists on a veil of secrecy." Editorial, *No Expanded Authority for AG*, DESERET MORNING NEWS, June 9, 2003, at A18. [Salt Lake City, Utah]

"Before Ashcroft is granted further powers, he should make a better accounting of how he's used the ones he already has, and Congress should repair their flaws." Editorial, *An Unjustified Plea to Compromise Liberties*, ROANOKE TIMES & WORLD NEWS, June 7, 2003, at A11. [Roanoke, Virginia]

"The modest legislation introduced by Rep. Joe Hoeffel (D-PA) will help the American people judge how the Department is conducting the war on terrorism. The bill requires the Department to issue public reports on its use of the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) powers:

"(1) an annual public report on the total number of U.S. persons (citizens and lawful residents) targeted for court orders under FISA and the number of persons targeted for electronic surveillance, physical searches, pen registers and business records (the names and identities of those targeted would not be revealed);

"(2) disclosure of the rules of the FISA Court and Court of Review;

"(3) public reporting of the number of times that information acquired through a FISA order is authorized for use by the Attorney General in criminal proceedings;

"(4) a report to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees on surveillance of public and university libraries; and

"(5) a report on the portions of FISA Court documents that contain legal reasoning, consistent with the protection of national security.

"I hope my colleagues can come together on this issue and agree that our constituents are entitled to know how their freedoms and rights are being protected."